

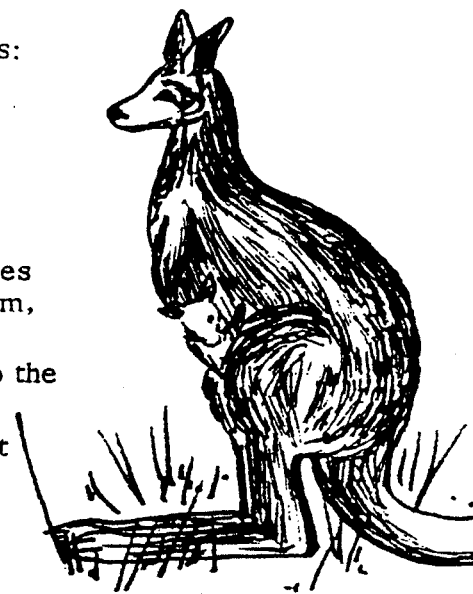
## COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES

The most helpless of mammal babies are the marsupials: the kangaroo, koala, and opossum. At birth the kangaroo is about one inch long, the koala is less than one inch, and the opossum is smaller than a bee. Young marsupials spend their first months in the mother's pouch. There they remain, just drinking milk and growing.

After a few months in the pouch, they begin playing games by jumping in and out. However, should something frighten them, they hurry back inside.

Even after the babies leave the pouch, they stay close to the mother. The opossum and koala often ride piggyback. This type of behavior continues until the koala and opossum are about one year old. The baby kangaroo, called a joey, outgrows the pouch at about ten months and remains with the mother for another eight months.

Although these babies are tiny and weak at first, they grow into relatively large, strong animals. The opossum is about the size of a cat, the koala is about as long as a yardstick, and some kangaroos become taller than man.



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1. This story is about:
  - (a) mammals
  - (b) baby animals
  - (c) marsupials
  - (d) animal behavior
2. The first months in the life of the young are spent:
  - (a) in pouches
  - (b) learning how to drink milk
  - (c) hiding
  - (d) riding piggyback
3. The koala may ride piggyback until he is:
  - (a) two years
  - (b) fifteen months
  - (c) ten months
  - (d) one year
4. If frightened, young marsupials:
  - (a) stand still and fight
  - (b) return to their mothers' pouches
  - (c) jump on their mothers' backs
  - (d) run away
5. After marsupial babies leave the mothers' pouch, they:
  - (a) are on their own
  - (b) leave but come back often
  - (c) remain close to the mother for several more months
  - (d) go find another group of their own kind to join
6. Behavior means:
  - (a) getting angry easily
  - (b) how one acts
  - (c) fear
  - (d) close
7. Birth size:
  - (a) determines habits
  - (b) indicates length of care needed
  - (c) determines animal class
  - (d) has little to do with final growth
8. The marsupial that makes the largest size change from birth to adulthood is the:
  - (a) tasmanian wolf
  - (b) opossum
  - (c) kangaroo
  - (d) koala